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ABSTRACT

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Consultation of World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centers in Europe are presented in this report. The consultation was held in accordance with Health for All (HFA) targets 36 ("Planning Education, and Use of All Health Personnel for Health for All") and 37 ("Education of Personnel in Other Sectors To Support Health for All"). The report examines the rate of collaborative centers and presents information provided by these centers on their current status regarding health manpower development. A general discussion section of the report reveals that there was general agreement on the need for an adequate geographic distribution of centers that would reflect the nature of the European Region, and discusses the need for an educational policy document. Also reported are the developments surrounding the creation of a European Master's Degree in Public Health. The report ends with a list of 14 recommendations and conclusions. An appendix provides a list of participants. (GLR)

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This document presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Consultation of WHO Collaborating Centres in Europe on Health Manpower Development for Health for All, held in Rome from 21 to 22 September 1990. It was convened by the Regional Office for Europe to promote work aimed at achieving the following target in the health for all strategy.[a]

TARGET 36

PLANNING, EDUCATION AND USE OF HEALTH PERSONNEL FOR HEALTH FOR ALL

Before 1990, in all Member States, the planning, training and use of health personnel should be in accordance with health for all policies, with emphasis on the primary health care approach.

TARGET 37

EDUCATION OF PERSONNEL IN OTHER SECTORS TO SUPPORT HEALTH FOR ALL

Before 1990, in all Member States, education should provide personnel in sectors related to health with adequate information on the country's health for all policies and programmes and their practical application to their own sectors.

Index terms

HEALTH MANPOWER - trends
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS - education
PUBLIC HEALTH - education
HEALTH FOR ALL
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
EUR

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[a] *Targets for health for all.* Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office Europe, 1985 (European Health for All Series No. 1).

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Background

The Consultation was held against the background of the issue by the WHO Regional Office for Europe of draft documents that will have major implications for the training of health personnel:

(a) "An education and training policy for HFA" (draft document) scheduled to be considered by the Regional Committee in 1991; and

(b) "European Master's degree in Public Health (EMPH)", a progress report by the ASPHER (Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region)/WHO Task Force for the "Training of Public Health Professionals for Health for All".

The Consultation was also the first occasion on which the collaborating centres on health personnel development of the WHO Regional Office for Europe had met as a group. This was made possible by the generous support given to the meeting by the Smith Kline Foundation, a WHO collaborating centre based in Milan. Given the important role envisaged for collaborating centres in the drive for health for all (HFA), it was felt important to strengthen cooperation between them, encourage exchanges and identify any weaknesses or handicaps in their position that could be remedied.

WHO collaborating centres will have an important role to play both in the dissemination of documents and in the implementation of the concepts they contain.

Introduction

Eight WHO collaborating centres were represented at the Consultation in Rome: Federal Republic of Germany (1), France (3), German Democratic Republic (1), Italy (1), Netherlands (1) and USSR (1). In addition to the participants from collaborating centres there were also members of the WHO/AMEE (Association for Medical Education in Europe) Task Force and heads of institutions from other European countries, who actively cooperate with the WHO Regional Office for Europe. There were 17 participants from 11 countries and they were supported by 5 staff members from WHO (3 from the Regional Office for Europe and 2 from headquarters, Geneva). Everyone attending had a common background in health personnel development. The participants are listed in Annex 1.

Scope and purpose

The purpose of the Consultation was to discuss the role of WHO collaborating centres in the implementation of a new educational policy and of a programme based on health for all for postgraduate public health training.

The collaborating centres were to be informed about the present work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe regarding the activities and the goals of the health for all strategy; the active role that centres could play at country and at European level was to be ascertained.

The meeting was also intended to give collaborating centres the opportunity to exchange views and experiences in the field of health personnel development.

Presentations by WHO collaborating centres

The following presentations were given by collaborating centres on their current status.

Centre de Sociologie et de Démographie médicales, Paris, France (CC: 1985 -)

The Centre has activities in four sectors: research and surveys on health personnel and on health systems in general; storage and retrieval of quantitative information on health personnel; dissemination of research findings to researchers and the public; and promotion of interchange and cooperation between research institutions. With the support of the French Government and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Centre creates and manages the European Health Manpower Database and publishes, on a yearly basis, "Characteristics, structures and dynamism of manpower for European health".

Academy of Public Health, Düsseldorf, Federal Republic of Germany (CC: 1989 -)

The Academy is an independent institution based on an agreement with the seven separate Federal States. Its work reflects very much the situation of the public health service in Germany. Current work includes training in primary health care, health education and environmental health, and training for public health managers in health information and communicable disease control. An important role is being played in the development of the EMPH. There are 40 staff members, including 12 academic positions.

Département de Pédagogie des Sciences de la Santé, Bobigny, France (CC: 1988 -)

The Department is active in two main fields: education of human resources for health and health education. It acts not only as a centre of training, counselling and evaluation, but also in the production of educational documents, and it has a major research function. There are 12 teachers, 4 technicians and 4 office staff.

Fondation Marcel Mérieux, Centre des Pensières, Veyrier du Lac, France (CC: 1990 -)

The objectives of the Foundation are to contribute to research, training and the dissemination of information in the fields of biology, immunology, epidemiology and preventive medicine. People attending meetings come not only from the health sector but also from related sectors. AIDS and nosocomial infections, both of which require an intersectoral approach, have been subjects of recent meetings. There are 6 staff members in this centre.

Academy for Continuing Medical Education, Berlin, German Democratic Republic (CC: 1988 -)

The Academy has had a long and distinguished record in a wide range of education and management activities. With the political changes

taking place in Germany at present, the Academy is in a period of transition, the most likely outcome of which will be close cooperation with the Berlin Humboldt University and Klinikum Berlin-Buch regarding: clinical training of medical students; postgraduate medical training; multidisciplinary supplementary training for non-medical professionals in the health sciences; postgraduate training for those scientists intending to become medical biologists, medical chemists, etc.; and advanced training for professionals in the public health services. There are 130 staff members.

Faculty of Medicine, University of Limburg, Netherlands (CC: 1989 -)

Some of the main activities of the Faculty are summer courses ("New ideas in health education"), adaptating the design of a skills laboratory to the needs and resources of developing countries; preparation of video tapes for tutor training; running the secretariat of the Network of Community-oriented Educational Institutions for Health Sciences; and assistance to innovative medical schools in developing countries. There is also close collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences at the same university.

Central Institute of Advanced Medical Studies (CIAMS), Moscow, USSR (CC: 1976 -)

Activity as a collaborating centre is very much based on the training and research of the Faculty of Soviet and International Health. CIAMS organizes various courses, both national and international, organized by the Central Institute for Advanced Medical Studies (CIAMS), and for more than 25 years this Institute has arranged WHO international training courses for public health administrators. For the organization of training and research, the WHO collaborating centre has employed 11 specialists from other faculties and departments of CIAMS. There are more than 2000 staff members, 8 faculties, 90 training departments and 11 research departments.

Fondazione Smith Kline, Milan, Italy (CC: 1988 -)

The Smith Kline Foundation is an independent foundation which was established in 1978 with the aim of improving undergraduate medical education and education in health economics. It also supports medical education associations. Workshops are organized on medical education for the faculties of medicine and for the scientific medical societies. The number of participants is 30-35 and the objective is to improve the quality of learning and teaching in Italian medical faculties. There are 5 staff members and 27 consultant teachers.

General discussion

In the discussion that followed the reports of the collaborating centres, there was general agreement on the need for an adequate geographic distribution of centres that would reflect the nature of the European Region. The Consultation also considered the fact that there were many institutions in Europe which played the same role as collaborating centres without being formally designated as such. Thus, in any assessment of the European situation, it was necessary to look at the work of both designated and nondesignated centres. There appeared to be scope for collaborating centres

to assist in the current programme of the WHO Regional Office aimed at helping with the health problems of the rapidly changing countries in central and eastern Europe.

The education policy document

The need for such a policy document was reaffirmed. The first major meeting on this topic was the International Consultation on Health Manpower Education for Health for All, held in Venice in December 1989 (EUR/ICP/HMD 157(S)). This meeting had concentrated on the health personnel challenge presented by target 36 and in the subsequent six months material had also been added to address the health personnel challenge presented by target 37. Thus the document presented in Rome dealt with the education of health professionals, the education of professionals in sectors related to health and the education of the community. Pointing out that HFA refers to disease prevention, healthy lifestyles, a healthier environment and health care development could make the policy document more attractive, especially to people in other sectors. Similarly, if it promoted a balanced view between the biomedical and biopsychosocial models, it would facilitate adoption in the health sector, particularly the medical education component. It was a truly health education policy document as it adopted the intersectoral approach required by HFA.

It was generally felt that the parts of the document relating to non-health sectors would be very difficult to implement, mainly because of the lack of established precedents and the problem of securing funding for such an innovatory approach. However, the insertion of material referring to the Healthy Cities project as a concrete example of an intersectoral, community and health promotion approach should be helpful in facilitating its adoption by other sectors. The need to secure the involvement of the education sector was regarded as being of paramount importance. Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Regional Committee, it was felt that as a first step there was a case for producing a much shorter document. This should be broad enough to be acceptable and to secure funding for implementation. Following this, there could be a series of much more detailed documents dealing with specific problems, for example, a document based on the Venice 1989 meeting for the health professions. However, the danger of superficial documents was recognized as these would be likely to meet with the same fate as that of many of their predecessors and very little would change.

The European Master's degree in Public Health

The developments that had taken place regarding the European Master's degree in Public Health were warmly welcomed. The work had begun in 1988 when ASPHER, together with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, started to develop a curriculum. The idea had been to develop a framework for the training of public health professionals for leadership in the new public health. However, there was no intention of imposing a uniform approach or standard; each school could relate the proposed model to its own practice. It should be seen as a public health methodology that followed a problem-solving approach.

It was felt that target 36 should be more closely reflected upon, and appropriate attention should be given to teacher training.

There was also a suggestion that as the work on the EMPH had been so well accepted and so widely developed, the time might be opportune to hold a mid-term review.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Collaborating centres should take steps to emphasize further within their countries the leadership and coordinating role that was envisaged for them in the functions described in their terms of reference.

2. In planning their future activities, collaborating centres should bear in mind the needs of central and eastern European countries as described at the fortieth session of the Regional Committee.

3. Collaborating centres should play as full a part as their terms of reference permit in facilitating the implementation of an "education and training policy for HFA" (educational policy document) and of the acceptance of the ideas and concepts contained in the European Master's degree in Public Health.

4. Collaborating centres should ensure that the ways in which they carry out their educational activities are in accordance with the educational criteria described in the education policy document.

5. Collaborating centres should be prepared to make their educational expertise available to professionals in all sectors.

6. Collaborating centres should consider the development of activities, courses and learning materials that will enable key health professionals to acquire the intersectoral attitudes, skills and knowledge required for the attainment of HFA.

7. Collaborating centres should redouble their efforts in the area of teacher training, placing major emphasis on training selected personnel to become trainers of teachers. Given the shortage of such key persons in the drive for HFA, the possibilities of international collaboration should be explored.

8. All collaborating centres should consider the possibility of having a programme of activities that reflects a balance between health professional education, the education of the public and intersectoral action so as to facilitate the attainment of health for all which requires action on all three fronts.

9. The education policy document and EMPH should be given extensive publicity at international, national and institutional levels through a planned and sustained awareness campaign by all concerned.

10. Consideration should be given to the idea of producing a much shorter education policy document for the Regional Committee, and then to produce more specific documents for different professional groups and problem areas.

11. The EMPH should reflect target 36 and contain explicit statements concerning the training of health personnel, particularly as regards management, and the assessment of training and performance.

12. The WHO Regional Office for Europe should take all possible action to reinforce the authority of collaborating centres as vehicles for HFA within their countries.

13. WHO should facilitate the exchange of information between collaborating centres and collaboration between them. The possibility of meetings on a regular basis should be considered.

14. WHO should act as the advocate for the utilization of the expertise possessed by collaborating centres and for recognition of the fact that such expertise has the same high status as that of more traditional academic and research areas.

Annex 1

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